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From: Armann, Steve
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2014 10:26 AM
To: Cota, Thomas@DTSC
Subject: FW: (PEER Press Release) Malibu Schools Highly Contaminated with Toxic PCBs

Importance: High

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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From: Maier, Brent
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2014 10:22 AM
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Cc: LEONIDO-JOHN, STEVEN; Kaiser, Sven-Erik
Subject: (PEER Press Release) Malibu Schools Highly Contaminated with Toxic PCBs
Importance: High

Please see attached PEER press release issued today on Malibu High School.

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For Immediate Release: Thursday, July 17, 2014
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MALIBU SCHOOLS HIGHLY CONTAMINATED WITH TOXIC PCBs
Classroom Levels Highest in the Nation
Independent New Tests Show Need for Broader, More Aggressive Remediation Plan

Classroom Levels Highest in the Nation Washington, DC — New testing in Malibu school

facilities reveals illegal levels of a toxic compound dramatically higher than previously reported--as much as 7400 times higher than legal limits and the highest known results for a classroom in the U.S. -- according to a document submitted today by Malibu Unites and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). The groups are calling upon the EPA to reject Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's plan to leave polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) found inside the schools in place for up to 15 years.

For months, teachers at Malibu Middle and High Schools and Juan Cabrillo Elementary School have raised concerns to the District about toxic contamination on campus, citing multiple cases of thyroid cancer and a dozen cases of thyroid disease. Others complain of rashes, migraines, hair loss and other health effects they believe stem from their work environment. PCBs are classified as a group 1 carcinogen and are linked with serious health effects, such as lower IQ and autism, even at low levels.

Samples of contaminated caulking and dirt from rooms that were not previously tested by the District confirm PCBs at thousands of times the levels previously released to the public. Laboratory results from these samples reveal that:

- One room in Juan Cabrillo Elementary School had caulk containing 340,000 parts-per-million (ppm) PCBs, meaning that approximately one-third of the caulk consisted of PCBs. The legal limit triggering removal is 50 ppm. This was the first time that this elementary school has been tested, despite eight months of promises from the District to do so, and indicates serious contamination affecting 5-11-year-olds;
- The highly contaminated room at Juan Cabrillo Elementary was one to which a teacher and her sixth-grade students had been moved to protect them from exposures in a middle school classroom which contained caulk only moderately above the 50 ppm legal threshold;
- The high school woodshop room has caulking in the interior doorframe that tested at 370,000 ppm PCBs. By contrast, the highest level previously reported by the district was 1,870 ppm in the library at MHS. This indicates that all three schools on the campus, the Elementary School, the Middle School and the High School have levels of contamination in violation of the Toxic Substance Control Act;
- The P.E. office had caulking in excess of 50 ppm which confirms that all four teachers diagnosed with thyroid cancer worked in rooms where PCBs exceeded legal limits; and
- Dirt samples from the two middle school classrooms that were previously trenched to lay down cables in August 2013 showed PCB levels 11 times higher than EPA's recommended level. This indicates possible contamination of the soil under the building which should be investigated.

"Sixth-grade students, including my own child, were unnecessarily exposed when relocated to a room that was more toxic than the room they were moved from," said Jennifer deNicola, President of Malibu Unites. "Superintendent Sandra Lyon knew when relocating them to this classroom that it had been previously occupied by a teacher with thyroid cancer, yet she did not test this classroom. This is highly irresponsible. A simple \$100 test would have protected our children from cancerous exposure."

The new test results were submitted to the District as part of comments on the latest PCB plan released on July 3, 2014, by Environ, the District's hired environmental firm, after its initial plan was rejected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The groups criticize the plan as wholly inadequate because, among other failings, it –

- Allows PCBs above legal limits to remain inside classrooms for 15 years or more;
- Does not include testing the caulking throughout the campus in all rooms built prior to 1979. By testing all the caulking the district would have discovered the extremely high levels found independently and could have protected teachers and students; and
- Limits monitoring of air quality to just one year, even if the PCBs remain in place for longer which would not ensure ongoing protection from known carcinogens.

“It is unconscionable that the District and EPA, by leaving PCBs in place, are playing free and loose with the health of Malibu students and staff. Samples should be collected from each source of suspected PCB contamination,” concluded Kurt Fehling of Fehling Group, LLC., an expert health consultant retained by Malibu Unites. “Until that happens, the parents and teachers will never know if the school is safe. The testing so far has been neither comprehensive nor transparent.”

“These new independent testing results show the utter bankruptcy of the ‘don’t test, don’t know’ approach embraced by the District,” stated PEER Senior Counsel Paula Dinerstein. “It is time the District admits that conditions at all three schools pose a severe threat to children and teachers that requires more than a pledge to clean countertops.”

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[Look at latest test results](#)

[Read Malibu Unites/PEER comments](#)

[View Malibu Unites proposal](#)

[See teacher objections to limited remediation approach](#)

[See primer on PCB health effects](#)